

SAUDI ARABIA | IN FOCUS

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**SEPTEMBER 6, 2011****ISLAM****King, Crown Prince address nation as Eid Al-Fitr begins**

The Custodian of The Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz and Crown Prince Sultan bin Abdulaziz congratulated the Kingdom on the occasion of the blessed Eid Al-Fitr. In a joint statement issued August 29, they thanked Allah Almighty for enabling Muslims to successfully fast during the holy month of Ramadan. "During Ramadan, we enjoyed the noble values of the month of fasting, including helping the poor, pardoning the oppressor and practicing the values of tolerance," the statement said. It added, "We thank Allah Almighty and appeal to Him to lead our nation towards whatever is good for its interests and to help the Muslim people to overcome the crises and calamities they incurred. We hope that Eid Al-Fitr will be an occasion to overcome that situation and achieve our aspirations. We ask Allah to bestow his mercy upon the souls of the deceased and to bless the entire world with peace and prosperity."

King Abdullah receives message from President Obama

During the past week, King Abdullah has received telephone calls and messages from a number of world leaders, including a message from U.S. President Barack Obama. In a response cable, the King said, "As I have received your congratulations for us and the people of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on the occasion of the blessed Eid Al-Fitr, I express my thanks and appreciation for your kind feelings, wishing Your Excellency constant good health and happiness and the friendly people of the United States of America steady progress and prosperity." He continued, "On this occasion, I express my pleasure to commend the strong and close historical relations existing between our two friendly countries and what they are looking forward to achieving, peace and justice and enhancing security and stability in the Middle East and all over the world, stressing the eagerness to move forward to further enhance the relations between our two countries in all fields."

More than 2 million worshippers perform prayers in Grand Mosque

More than 2 million worshippers from around the world performed Isha (evening) and Taraweeh (post-Isha) prayers in the Grand Mosque in Makkah on August 26, the final Friday of Ramadan. The Umrah (minor pilgrimage) performers and visitors carried out their rituals smoothly and comfortably. More than 7,000 personnel were available to assist the worshippers, who had access to thousands

of trolleys for the sick and elderly and more than 27,000 bottles of cold Zamzam holy water. A total of 920 individuals escorted visitors back and forth through the 176 gates of the Grand Mosque. Meanwhile, more than 700,000 worshippers performed Isha and Taraweeh prayers in the Prophet's Mosque in Madinah.

FOREIGN AID

IIROSA distributes more than 7 million kilograms of aid in Somalia

The International Islamic Relief Organization of Saudi Arabia (IIROSA) has distributed 7,469,000 kilograms (16.5 million lbs) of foodstuffs, clothes, medicines and other relief materials to 45,300 people displaced by famine in various parts of Somalia. According to Secretary General Dr. Adnan bin Khalil Pasha, the IIROSA has also initiated a campaign to distribute 300 tanks of drinking water to areas suffering from extreme thirst.

Humanitarian sealift for Somalia launched

Second Deputy Prime Minister Prince Nayef bin Abdulaziz, who serves as General Supervisor of the Saudi National Campaign to Relieve the Somali People, has ordered the launch of a sealift between Jeddah and Mogadishu to transport humanitarian aid to Somalia. Meanwhile, four Saudi planes left Riyadh Air Base on September 4 heading for Mogadishu and carrying more than 45 tons of foodstuffs. On August 29, two planes delivered 20 tons of aid, provided by Saudi citizens, to Somalia.

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Saudi Ambassador Statement on Tenth Anniversary of 9-11

WASHINGTON [September 11, 2011] — *Saudi Ambassador to the United States Adel A. Al-Jubeir today issued the following statement on the 10th anniversary of 9-11:*

“Today marks the 10th anniversary of the terrible crime committed in New York, Washington and Pennsylvania in which almost 3,000 innocent people were killed in an evil act condemned and abhorred by all religions and cultures. Over the past ten years, the world has come together to fight the scourge of terrorism with determination and resolve in order to, God willing, deny terrorists the ability to inflict harm on the innocent. Today, we renew our condolences and sympathy to the families of the victims and the people of the United States.”

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Saudi Arabia among 20 Most Competitive Economies in the World

WASHINGTON, September 8, 2011-- Saudi Arabia is one of the top 20 most competitive economies in the world, according to the annual Global Competitiveness Report released this week by the World Economic Forum. The Kingdom was ranked 17th, up from 21st last year. The World Economic Forum examined the business operating environments and competitiveness of more than 130 economies worldwide.

The Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz has made the Saudi economy one of his top priorities since his ascension to the throne. King Abdullah's efforts to open the economy to foreign investment, expand the job market and improve the quality of the education system have made the Saudi economy stronger than ever.

"This is a testament to the initiatives King Abdullah has undertaken to ensure that Saudi Arabia is a leader in the global economy," said Saudi Ambassador to the United States, Adel bin Ahmed Al-Jubeir. "It is clear that King Abdullah's commitment to diversify and privatize the Saudi economy is working."

Given the finite nature of Saudi Arabia's natural resources and the historical importance they have played in the nation's development, the Kingdom has taken precautions to expand its economic base to minimize its reliance on oil. The International Monetary Fund expects Saudi Arabia's non-oil sector to grow by 5.4 percent this year.

The Kingdom has also worked to open its economy to foreign investment. Since joining the World Trade Organization in 2005, Saudi Arabia has become the largest destination for foreign direct investment in the Arab world. In 2010, Saudi Arabia ranked 8th in the world in attracting direct foreign investment according to a report released by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.

For more information on the Saudi economy, please visit www.saudiembassy.net and follow the Embassy on Twitter (@SaudiEmbassyUSA) or on the Embassy YouTube page.

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